

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

15. (new) A prophylactic HCV vaccine composition.

16. (new) A prophylactic HCV vaccine composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of at least one HCV single or specific oligomeric envelope E1 protein or a part thereof; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

17. (new) A prophylactic HCV vaccine composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of a combination of at least two HCV single or specific oligomeric envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof wherein said at least two E1 proteins or parts thereof are derived from different HCV genotypes, subtypes or isolates; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

18. (new) A prophylactic HCV composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of at least one HCV single or specific oligomeric envelope E1 protein or a part thereof; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

19. (new) A prophylactic HCV composition comprising a prophylactically effective amount of a combination of at least two HCV single or specific oligomeric envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof wherein said at least two E1 proteins or parts thereof are derived from different HCV genotypes or subtypes or isolates; and at least one of a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, adjuvant or vehicle.

20. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 wherein said E1 protein is E1s.

21. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 wherein said E1 protein or part thereof is produced by a recombinant host.

22. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to claim 21 wherein said recombinant host is a recombinant mammalian cell, a recombinant yeast cell or a recombinant virus.

23. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 which is capable of eliciting protection of a mammal against subsequent infection with a HCV genotype or subtype homologous to the HCV genotype or subtype, or HCV genotypes or subtypes, from which said E1 protein or proteins, or parts thereof, are derived.

24. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 which is capable of eliciting protection of a mammal against subsequent infection with a HCV genotype or subtype heterologous the HCV genotype or subtype, or HCV genotypes or subtypes, from which said E1 protein or proteins, or parts thereof, are derived.

25. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 wherein the cysteines of said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are blocked.

26. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 to which said HCV envelope E1 proteins or parts thereof are added as viral-like particles.

27. (new) A method for inducing an immune response in a non-HCV-infected mammal comprising administering a prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 15 to 19 to said mammal.

28. (new) The method according to claim 27 wherein said immune response is a humoral and/or a cellular immune response.

29. (new) A method of preventing evolution to chronic infection of a challenge HCV infection in a mammal comprising administering an effective amount of a

prophylactic HCV composition according to claim 15 prior to said challenge HCV infection.

30. (new) A method of protecting a mammal against a challenge HCV infection comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition according to claim 15 prior to said challenge HCV infection.

31. (new) A method of preventing evolution to chronic infection of a challenge HCV infection in a mammal comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 prior to said challenge HCV infection.

32. (new) A method of protecting a mammal against a challenge HCV infection comprising administering an effective amount of a prophylactic HCV composition according to any of claims 16 to 19 prior to said challenge HCV infection.

33. (new) The method according to claim 31 wherein said challenge HCV infection is an infection with a HCV of a genotype or subtype homologous or heterologous to the HCV genotype or subtype, or HCV genotypes or subtypes, from which the E1 protein or part thereof comprised in said composition are derived.

34. (new) The method according to claim 32 wherein said challenge HCV infection is an infection with a HCV of a genotype or subtype homologous or

heterologous to the HCV genotype or subtype, or HCV genotypes or subtypes, from which the E1 protein or part thereof comprised in said composition are derived.

35. (new) The method according to claim 29 or 30 wherein said mammal is a human.

36. (new) The method according to claim 31 wherein said mammal is a human.

37. (new) The method according to claim 32 wherein said mammal is a human.

38. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to claim 23 wherein said mammal is a human.

39. (new) The prophylactic HCV composition according to claim 24 wherein said mammal is a human.